

DRAMATIC MIRROR

AND

LITERARY COMPANION.

DEVOTED TO THE STAGE AND THE FINE ARTS.

EDITED BY JAMES REES.]

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[NUMBER V.]

For the Dramatic Mirror.
THE
DRAMATIC AUTHORS
OF
AMERICA.

E, F, G, H.

Pencilled messengers,
Coming in golden raiment.

MRS. ELLIS.—*The Duke of Buckingham*.
This play was produced in New York some few years ago, and failed.

JAMES ELLISON. *The American Captives or, the Siege of Tripoli*, acted in Boston in 1812.

ROBERT W. EWING. *Le Solitaire*; *Sponge Again*; *The Frontier Maid*; *The Highland Seer*; *The Election*; *Imperial Victim*; *La Fayette*; *Quentin Durward*; *Exit in a Hurry*; *Bride of Death*. This gentleman is better known to the reading community as a theatrical critic, having established a reputation as a severe censor of the stage, under the signature of "Jaques," during the years of 1825 and 26.

MRS. MARGARET V. FAUGERES. *Belisarius*, tragedy, printed in 1795. This lady was the daughter of Mrs. Bleeker. She published a volume of poems in 1793.

FIELD. *France and Liberty*; *Rhyme without Reason*, a farce.

J. M. FIELD. This gentleman is the "Straws" of the New Orleans Picayune, a paper justly celebrated for the talents displayed in the editorial department, as well as the rich vein of humour running as it were spontaneously through its columns. As an actor Mr. Field is universally admired, he has signalled himself as a dramatist, in the production of several excellent local pieces; the best of which in our opinion, is *the Tourist*. *Tug's Pilgrimage*, by this gentleman is also spoken of very highly by the southern critics.

J. F. FOOT. *The Little Thief, or the Night Walker*.

FOSTER. *The Inheritance*.

MANLY B. FOWLER. *The Prophecy*; *Orlando*; *Female Revenge*.

JAMES FENNEL. *The Wheel of Truth*; *Lindor and Clari*; *Picture of Paris*; Author of his own *Life*, published in 1814. Fennell came over to this country some time during the year '92 or '93; his reputation as an actor was not fully known on this side of the Atlantic; as a wild, rattle-brain spendthrift, he was much better known. In the early part of his life, Fennell studied the law, but he soon spurned the cob-web winding and intricacy of the path, and under the name of Cambray, offered himself to the managers of the Edinburgh Theatre, and in 1787, made his first appearance as *Othello*.

* Under this head numerous fugitive pieces of poetry have appeared in the Picayune, which have been extensively copied, and are attributed to his pen.

Until the day of his death, this was his favorite character; a critic of no mean character speaks of him thus:—"His appearance in the Moors,—*Othello*, and *Zanga*, was most expressive, and his tawny figure, superb; his Glenalvon was a fine piece of acting, and generally his villains appeared very natural."

Under the assumed name of Cambray, he played with some success, until a dispute arising respecting parts with a favourite actor; the populace.

"The scum That rises uppermost when the nation boils," drove Mr Fennell from the stage. Previous or rather before this time and his engagement with Wignell, of Philadelphia, he appeared in Paris—not as an actor to observe the Talmas of the stage, but as my lord Anglais, and supported a hotel in great style, at the expense of all who trusted to his specious manners and fine appearance.

Fennell was a remarkably handsome figure, above six feet in height—his features, not handsome, were expressive, and over which he had a wonderful command. Thomas A. Cooper, the tragedian, our veteran Cooper, used to say, when perceiving Fennell's approach, "Here comes two yards of a very proper man." In Philadelphia, his style of living was somewhat similar to that in Paris; while, at the same time, he was the idol of the town, the companion of all the dissipated limbs of aristocracy, which then abounded in Philadelphia; and for a time he revelled in the luxury of high living and applause, both on and off the stage. Fennell had great pretensions to ingenuity, speculation, etc. He indulged somewhat extensively in the latter, by erecting salt-works on a new mode of his own. This, like every thing else, failed; and in 1815, he presented the powerless remains of what God had made man; but now,

"Levelled to the earth, a scathed and Blighted oak."

In the year 1800, oppressed by poverty and debt, amid and surrounded by those who, in brighter days, took him willingly by the hand, Fennell was now next to being a beggar! he had but one resource, he applied for and obtained a benefit,—he played *Zanga*, which was productive.

We find him in 1802, incarcerated in the common jail, his hope of relief, if not release, depended upon a Farce he had written; on the 4th of February it was brought out, and on the second night played for the author's benefit, and the receipts were \$600!!

In January, 1806, Mr. Fennell became a star, and played *Hamlet*, *Othello*, etc. etc.

At last, he became so reduced and besotted, that a Mrs. Brown, with whom he resided in North Alley, was under the necessity of turning him out of the house; for several days nothing

was heard of him; one night, after she had retired to rest, she was awoke by a noise in the street; raising the window to ascertain the cause, she was answered by Fennell, begging admission:—

"You cannot come in here, Mr. Fennell, indeed you cannot."

"I am a wanderer, madam, an outcast, homeless, penniless."

"I cannot help you, Mr. Fennell; you know how you behaved before!"

"I remember nothing, Mrs. Brown, but that I am wretched, sick, and helpless."

"All this I admit, Mr. Fennell, but why not go somewhere else?"

"I have no friend but you; then,

"Pity the sorrows of a poor old man, Whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door,

Whose days are dwindled to the shortest span, Oh! give relief, and heaven will bless your store."

Fennell was celebrated for his recitations, but more particularly the *Beggar's Petition*. On this occasion, he spoke it so feelingly, and the circumstance of his situation suiting the words and the occasion, that Mrs. Brown opened wide her doors,—welcomed the houseless wanderer in.

He remained with this good hearted woman until his death, which was shortly after. Fennell left several children, three of whom are still living in Philadelphia, two sons and a daughter.

HENRY J. FINN.—*Montgomery, or the Falls of Montgomery*; *Casper Hauser*; *Removing the Deposits*; &c. The annexed sketch of this talented author and actor, is taken from a New York periodical; it appeared immediately after the disastrous loss of the *Lexington*, which occurred on the 10th of January, 1840.

Among the passengers in the *Lexington*, whose loss we deplore, the public at large are perhaps best acquainted with the name and features of Henry J. Finn. As an actor he was gifted with true genius. His comic powers were, we think, equalled by those of no living performer. The spontaneous flashes of wit and merriment which sparkled through all his personations gave them a peculiar zest. Although a native of this city we do not think he was ever fully appreciated here. In Boston he has been the paramount favorite of the theatre-going public for the last fifteen years. His representations of *Beau Shatterly*, *Philip Garbois*, *Sir Peter Teazle*, *Bob Logic*, *Paul Shack*, *Monsieur Jacques*, with fifty other difficult parts, will long live in the memories of thousands of delighted auditors. His unflinching buoyancy of disposition, his prompt and happy humor, his general intelligence and well cultivated talents united to his sterling worth and gentlemanly demeanor, rendered him a most agreeable companion in social life, and justly endeared him to many friends.

Poor Finn! It was but on Monday last that we saw him in the vigor of his genial prime, full of vivacity and gaiety of heart. He had been prosperous in his Southern tour, and spoke with a tone of joyful anticipation of his return to his wife and children, at his country-seat at Newport,

where he would enjoy his literary leisure for the rest of the season. And he proffered us his kind services, and promised to write us, and send us the result of his fireside meditations. The current of his thoughts seemed to sparkle on brightly to the last, and he parted from us with a jest on his lip, and a promise to show us the sports of Newport in the summer. Alas!

"Et nunc, sub undis oceanii,
Procul ab amicis,
Immatura morte quiescit!"

We have said that Mr. Finn was born in the city of New York. It must have been about forty years ago. At an early age, as we learn from an account published some years since, in a Boston paper, he was sent to the Academy at Hackensack, then in high repute, under Mr. Traphagen; after that to the Latin School, in New-ark Academy, kept by Finley, and from thence, to Princeton College; he was then placed in the office, and became a student of Thomas Phoenix, Esq., late District Attorney of New York, where he remained three years. He was then sent for by an uncle in England, who was in affluence; he embarked with his mother in a vessel called the *Esther Lindo*, which foundered on her passage. The passengers and crew took to the boat, and were picked up by a ship bound for Holland, and landed at Falmouth. Even thus early in life did Finn experience a foretaste of the awful fate which was to terminate his career!

He arrived in London. The novelties and allurements that surrounded him, led him to disregard the strict injunctions of his uncle, and as the youth chose to indulge his notions of Yankee independence, he was, as they say in England, cut off with a shilling. He then turned his attention to the stage for a support, and appeared in subordinate characters at the Haymarket Theatre.

A late number of the London New Monthly Magazine, conducted by Theodore Hook, says, in a notice of a piece called "The Sleep Walker," that "owing to the excellent acting of Mr. Jones, and Mr. Finn in the little part of Thomas, it was the most successful piece of the season;" so that even in his first attempt, and in a trifling character, he gave promise of reaching the reputation he has since acquired. After that he took to the tragic line, and continued it up to the time of his arrival in Boston, where he became convinced that he had mistaken his forte, and though his tragedy might be good, his comedy was far superior. So he gave up *Gloster*, *Shylock*, and *Macduff*, for *Paul Pry*, *Mawworm*, and *Dr. Ollapod*.

Finn's versatility was as extraordinary off the stage as on it. He could paint miniatures very beautifully, as also landscapes and portraits in oil. Some of his caricatures are remarkably clever. As a writer he possessed talents of a highly respectable order. His comic songs are among the most ingenious specimens of the kind in the language. He was master of a pure English prose style, and has left a MS. tragedy in blank verse, founded, if we recollect aright, on the story of Joan of Arc. He at one time owned and edited the *Savannah Georgian*, and was one of the principal originators of the *New Orleans Picayune*. He has written comic annals, comic almanacs, and comic songs by dozens, and has also been quite successful in many productions of a graver cast.—During the great speculating mania of '36 and '37, he launched somewhat extensively into purchases of stocks, whereby he made inroads upon the very handsome property he had accumulated by his industry. Enough however was saved to secure him and his family a liberal competence. He leaves a wife and nine children, who will deplore in him the true and devoted husband and ever affectionate father.

In all his relations in life Mr. Finn was irreproachable.—Few men have lived more blameless lives or won more general esteem and respect. We have done but imperfect justice to his character in this brief and hurried sketch. Honor to his memory! His loss will make dim the sunshine of many a heart, which was wont to throb with pleasurable anticipation at the sound of his ever-welcome voice!

THOMAS GODFREY.—This gentleman, the son of Thomas Godfrey, the inventor of the quadrant, was born in the year 1736. At the age of 29 he wrote the *Prince of Parthia*. This is said to be the first tragedy written and printed in the United States, which in itself is a circumstance sufficiently remarkable to entitle it to notice. [Printed in Philadelphia, 1765, 4to.]

C. E. GRICE.—*Battle of New Orleans*, first played in New York on Easter Monday, April 7th, 1817. A writer of the day in speaking of it says:—"It does not merit criticism."

H.

"There are many writers in our country as yet unknown to fame, and unless the press undertake their cause, and, with its mighty engine of power, draw them forth to grace the stage, we are somewhat apprehensive they will be lost to us forever."—ANON.

EDWARD HALL.—*Nolens Volens; or the Biter Bit*.

COL. HAMILTON.—*The Enterprise*; opera, acted in Baltimore, 1823.

MRS. HATTON.—*Tummany*.

M. HAWKINS.—*The Saw Mill*.

JOHN HENRY.—*The School for Soldiers*.

JAMES A. HILLHOUSE.—*Percy's Mask*. *Hadad*. This gentleman is the son of the Hon. James Hillhouse, of New Haven. He received a degree at Yale College, in 1808. After this, he engaged in business as a merchant in New York; but latterly, we believe, has attended to no occupation but that of letters. His first publication was *Percy's Mask*, a dramatic poem which came out first in London, and was reprinted here in 1820. In 1821 appeared at New York, *Judgment*, a vision, a descriptive poem, in blank verse, and in 1825, *Hadad*, a dramatic poem.

J. HODGKINSON.—*The Man of Fortitude*.

E. C. HOLLAND.—*The Corsair*.

DAVID HUMPHREYS.—*The Widow of Malabar*, tragedy; and a comedy, name not known. (Never published.)

WM. H. HYER.—*Rosa*, a melo-drama, printed in 1822. (See Anonymous.)

F. HAYNES.—*The Tour de Nesle*, *Iron Mask*, *Lucretia Borgia*. These are, as their names imply, transactions from the French and were all played successfully in New Orleans.

J. C. M. HARRISBURG.—*Savonarda*. Published in New York by H. Welsh, never played.

CAROLINE LEE HENTZ.—*Zamorah*, or the *Western Wild*; *Moorish Bride*; *Zara*. This lady resides in Cincinnati, where she is universally esteemed. Her *Zamorah* is an excellent Indian play. The writer of this saw it ably acted at Caldwell's New Theatre, New Orleans, on the 1st of January, 1833.

FREDERICK S. HILL.—*Shoemaker of Toulouse*; *Six Degrees of Crime*. Very popular throughout the United States.

JOSEPH HUTTON.—*Coffee & Duffee*; *The School for Prodigals*; *Modern Honor*; *The Wounded Hussar*; *The Orphan of Prague*; *Fashionable Follies*. Hutton's history is identified with that of the drama in our city. He was an actor, as well as an author, but much more successful in the latter capacity. His *Coffee & Duffee*, was highly applauded; its allusion to a duel in high life was truly ludicrous, and the characters most admirably drawn. He died in the far west.

ISAAC HARBY.—*Alberti*, a tragedy in 5 acts, acted in Charleston, 1818. *The Gordian Knot*, a tragedy. *Alexander Severus*. He died in New York, on the morning of the 14th of November, 1828, universally regretted. Like all authors, Mr. Harby had his difficulties and troubles, but the most provoking, and at the same time amusing incident in his dramatic career, was when he presented his beautiful tragedy of *Alberti*, to the manager of the Charleston Theatre in 1818, that enlightened individual, after attempting a perusal of the manuscript, exclaimed, "*De englees was not veri cool, dat de play and de incidents, des avantures, de someting to catch de people, Mr. Harby wish to write like de Shakespeare man, one great big genius, eh! by gar!*"

GEORGE WASHINGTON HARBY.—*Tytoona*, or the *Battle of Saratoga*, a five act play, eminently successful in New Orleans. *Minka*, or the *Russian Daughter*; *Mahommed*; *The Robber Girl*; *Azzo*; *Abon Hussan*; *The Gentleman in Black*; *Nick of the Woods*; *Twenty Years Life of a Courtesan*. This gentleman is a eminent teacher in New Orleans, and enjoys a high reputation as a scholar and writer, most of the pieces named have been successfully played. Connected with the last drama named, the production of this gentleman, is a circumstance of the most peculiar and extraordinary nature, and we regret that events of which would arise out of its announcement deter us from relating it here. We question if in the wide and extended field of dramatic composition a similar circumstance ever occurred or is likely to occur to disturb the otherwise even tenor of an author's ways.—At some future time, we may allude to it in another shape; we simply mention it here for the purpose of conveying to the author our knowledge of the fact, and to induce him to give us a *carte blanche*, to use our information as would best suit us, and the desire we have to make the most of a good thing.

MYSTERIES AND MORALITIES. (Concluded.)

John of Salisbury, a writer of the twelfth century, who was himself a monk of Canterbury, is, like the rest of his brethren, ardent and energetic in his declamations against minstrels. Because it was the business of the monks to make their way to the heart through the medium of the senses; of this their miracles are proofs; and because the minstrels in their tales and fables, when entertaining gay company, introduced many truths, undeniable truths, at which the monks were offended, as they smarted under the lash of the satirist; because, too, these performers were either under the protection of some powerful chief (as the *Fools* afterwards were,) or by travelling from place to place, dispersed their ludicrous attacks on their antagonists far and wide; in spite of all attempts, on the part of the monks and their adherents, to prevent or to counteract their effects.

However that might be, John of Salisbury expressly denominates the objects of his reprehension *spectacula et infinita tyrocinia vanitatis quibus qui omnino otiari non possunt, periculosius occupantur*. Spectacles and innumerable rudiments of vanity, by which persons who could not endure to be idle might be occupied in worse than idleness.

While the minstrels were the only dramatists, it is most probable that their memories were stored with many pieces which were traditional, and consequently short: these were merely interludes, which betwixt their performances of singing and dancing they introduced: they were frequently exhibited in the inn yards of the metropolis: places which, from their surrounding galleries, of which we have some few specimens still left, could be with little trouble, converted into tolerable theatres.

The minstrels, among the abundance of their qualifications, professed pharmacy, and prescribed as apothecaries: they vended their medicines at markets and fairs, and were consequently the first mountebanks. In order to induce the people to swallow their nostrums, they, after a verbose recommendation, had them presented by one of their tribe, who performed the Merry Andrew! a character that is still retained as an appendage to the itinerant doctor. The medical lottery, in which medicines are the blanks, and the prizes a silver cup, spoons, &c., is a more modern contrivance.

Against monkish prejudice and power, the drama had a hard struggle for existence; the actors, obliged to depend on the casual bounty of the nobility, or on their collections at the fairs and festivals, were, with respect to their revenues, in a very precarious state. Nevertheless, it must have become of considerable importance, not only in England, but all over christendom, as the people of all nations are by a council of the Lateran forbidden to be present at stage plays, or to encourage tumblers and jesters.—*Can. 15, 16. Scrip. tom. iii. p. 734.*

Bradwardin, archbishop of Canterbury, wrote against the stage, in 1345. He was followed by Wickliff, who has been termed the morning star of reformation, who levelled his eloquence, against plays in 1380.

Miracle plays and mysteries, representing the history of some legendary saints, were common in the metropolis in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: they are mentioned by Fitzstephen, in a passage thus translated by Stripe: "London, instead of plays belonging to the theatre, hath plays of more holy subjects, representations in which the holy confessors wrought, and sufferings in which the glorious constancy of martyrs did appear."

From the early part of the fourteenth century, every adventitious circumstance seems to have taken a dramatic turn; their pageants, shows, feasting, jests, and tournaments, had all a kind of histrionic arrangement, and were calculated to produce a theatrical effect.

The monks and friars discerning at a great distance, the fall of their establishment, endeavoured, in their miracle plays and mysteries, to oppose pleasure to pleasure, and sport to sport;—from their then influence, their example was followed by the public schools; and their system was afterwards received and adopted by the parish clerks, who seem at one time, to have shared the applause of the town with the professional actors. To these succeeded our better known dramatists, and dramatic establishments.

In the course of the fourteenth century, the manners of the English were rendered conspicuous in the display of most ostentatious and extravagant magnificence: as well of the court as of the people.

The *cours pléniers*, which were held twice a year, viz. at Easter and All Saints' Days in

France, were held at Whitsuntide, and Christmas in England, where they were introduced by Edward the third. *Cours pléniers* were also held by the monarchs of both countries at their coronations, marriages, or the baptism of their children, and when they conferred on them the order of knighthood. "These festivals did not fail to attract a great number of quacks, jugglers, rope dancers, merry Andrews, and mimics. The merry Andrews told stories; those that were called jugglers played on their cymbals, monkeys, dogs, and bears, danced. It said that the mimics excelled in their art, and that by their gestures, attitudes and postures, they expressed a passage in history as clearly and as pathetically as if they had recited it." *St. Foix, Essays upon Paris, vol. ii. p. 64.*

These exhibitions took place in the court yards and immense halls of the palaces.

When Philip the Fair, knighted his three sons, with the pomp of ancient chivalry, on Whitsunday, 1313, he invited the king and queen of England, who, with a great number of their barons crossed the channel, on purpose to be present. This festival lasted eight days, and was rendered no less remarkable by the magnificence of the dresses exhibited, than by the sumptuousness of the tables, and the infinite variety of diversions, and amusements, that were upon this occasion drawn together. France and England equally combined to furnish characters and actors; so that this is stated to have been one of the most superb, and at the same time entertaining spectacles, ever exhibited. "The princes and lords changed their dresses three times every day. The Parisians presented several shows. In one was displayed the glory of the blessed; another exhibited a view of the infernal regions, and represented the torments of the damned." To these succeeded a procession, "in which appeared a great variety of the animal creation; this was termed 'the Feast of the Fox.'" *Hist. de Paris, tom. i. p. 42.*

If this concise statement of what appears to be the descent of the histrionic art, be correct, we may consider the proper drama as derived to us from the earliest ages; while, nevertheless the clerical imitations of sacred histories practised in England, might be imported with many other fopperies and follies from the East.

FOREIGN THEATRICALS.

Mr Placide, an American actor, made a successful debut as Sir Peter Teazle, at the Haymarket, on Friday evening. He was equally successful in the character of Lingo, in O'Keefe's farce of the "Agreeable Surprise."—*Bell's Life in London.*

An American actor of repute, Mr. Placide, made a successful appearance on Friday, in Sir Peter Teazle and Lingo. Favourable accounts are given of him: implying, however, that his *Lingos* will be better than his *Sir Peters*. We shall see. From this we infer that the Editor was not present on the occasion.—*London Examiner.*

Mr. Placide, from the American Stage, made his first appearance upon the English boards at this theatre, on Friday night, in the character of Sir Peter Teazle. His performance was strictly artistical, and evinced considerable study and perception of a very difficult part. We delight much in welcoming from America any actor who can worthily sustain the honors of the Drama; and whilst we give our opinion that Mr. Placide is not quite another "Salmon" in the market, we are desirous to record our conviction that he is a very superior performer, whom we much desire to see again.

We waited for an *Agreeable Surprise*. We had the *Lingo*; but what did it amount to but a

queer reading of the part? Our friend was placid. Had he recollected what "glorious John" had done in the part, he would have evinced some humour. As it was, we can only say, it was placid without the humour.—*London Age.*

The character of Sir Peter Teazle, does not afford sufficient scope for the peculiar excellences of Mr. Placide, although he is great in it and scarcely has an equal. The English are slow to applaud, and still slower in giving credit to an American actor, while we—"we the hewers of wood, and drawers of water," actually applaud every thing foreign, good or bad, indiscriminately.

Brough the vocalist, made his first appearance in Dublin, last month, at the Horticultural Dinner. He blarneyed up his friends across the water of course.

At Drury Lane, which opens in December, Miss Romer, Miss P. Horton, Mrs. Keely, Miss Poole, Miss Gould, Mrs. H. Wallack, Mrs. Serle, Phillips, and Gaubillei—no tenor yet named. Celeste, the Wallacks, and Macready, are still at the Haymarket. Covent Garden, opens this month with Sheridan Knowles' new play. Two new operas, one written by Rooke composer of *Amilie*, and one by a Mr. Tully, will be produced. Adelaide Kemble, it is said, is engaged. E. Seguin, Harrison, C. White, Miss Rainforth, who with Madame, will form the operatic company. Adelaide Kemble made a great sensation in Italy. She is a sister of the immortal Fanny, now Mrs. Butler.

The Haymarket bills are black with coming revivals of Shakspeare, in which Macready is to play the principal parts.

A new after piece of the broadest kind entitled, "*Foreign Offices, or The Court of Queen Anne*," has been produced, in which Celeste figures in male attire.

The Minor theatres are also flourishing. "Barnaby Rudge," has already three representatives—Miss Fortescue at the Lyceum, Mrs. Keely at the New Strand, and Mrs. Homer at Saddlers Wells.

An English giantess who stood seven feet two in her stockings, is dead. Ducrow is broken in mind and body since the destruction of his theatre. The Ravens are still at Vauxhall. A Signor Rossini is also there, who ascends a rope 300 feet high. Cerito is at Liverpool.

Under the head of dramatic doings we find the following hit at George Jones, the American tragedian—so styled:—

"Mr. G. J.—," announced Horatio; and in strutted the would be American Roscius. Though I had never before seen him, yet I knew him well by description;—a regular out and outer, a snorter or screamer, as our trans-Atlantic friends are pleased to call such persons—persons whose sole claim to attention consists in the most daring effrontery and impudent vanity. Unwilling to follow the path of fame, they have seized her trumpet, and blown far and wide the sounds of their own folly in such discordant blasts, the good taste sickens, and common sense shrinks back affrighted from their presence; and yet these people, from the mere assumption of talent, find admirers. The man now before me was the lion of a little set, a coterie of fair authoresses admirers of literature, women of family—women who should know better, but who, pleased at finding themselves suddenly looked up to as judges, and elevated into patronesses, at once condescend to make much of their *protégé*, invite him to their houses, and give parties to enable him to spout Shakspeare, or read one of their own "little effusions," get the aspirant an engagement at one of the large theatres for three nights, through the private interest of their titled relatives (for be it well understood, a lord is omnipotent with the manager,) and when the man is deservedly hissed off, go about assuring their friends that the talented creature was condemned by a party sent purposely to hiss him, by a rival tragedian."

DRAMATIC MIRROR, AND LITERARY COMPANION.

Saturday Morning, September 11th, 1841.

STARS.

The system of starrng, as pursued by those whose claims are of a high order, is injurious to a well organised dramatic corps. A line of distinction is drawn between every member of a company, and thus each lays a claim to the right of starrng on a small scale. "I wont play this part, nor that part, my line is tragedy, decided tragedy;" "mine," exclaims another, "is low comedy;" "and mine," reiterates one in all the majesty of 'pomp and circumstance,' is melo-drama." Our opinion has always been that an actor in his time must 'play many parts.' We came to this conclusion after reading in an old work, some what popular even at the present day, a passage to that effect, and if we mistake not it is to be found in one of Billy Shakspeare's stage plays.

The hobby for being popular and climbing over the head and shoulders of our fellow creatures is gaining ground, and it is a source of regret to us, when we notice this ambitious spirit carried into our theatres; a modest worth and unassuming merit stand no chance, they are crushed by the onward march of vulgar aspiration and pretenders to every thing calculated to enhance the character of the legitimate drama. There is not at the present writing, but one star among us; yet do we see a few favored names paraded upon the theatre bills in large letters. This is decidedly wrong; in the first place there is nothing to justify it; in the second, it gives offence to *real talent*, and is a palpable and direct insult to the other members of the company. It is hard enough in all conscience for stock actors to be compelled to play second, third and fourth to *real stars*, but it is rather too bad to play second fiddle to those of their own capacity, whose name happens to be more popular with the stage or acting manager.

It is said of actors that they must have degenerated sadly since the commencement of the starrng system. We do not doubt it; there is not an American actor but feels it, aye, sensibly. What was it drove poor Roberts from the Philadelphia stage, and accelerated his death in a southern state? What was it that dimmed the lustre of the bright fame of 'old Jeff'? What broke up the legitimate drama about that period, and scattered a company playing at the Chesnut street house, unequalled in the world?—The starrng system!

These would-be stars come among us from all points of the compass, made up of all nations and qualities; they glimmer for a few nights, attracting, perhaps, one or two full houses, and staying till the imposture is detected then pass away to delude some other simple community, which naturally believes they must be great performers, because they travel from place to place, and make such a figure in the play bills, where their names are always put in capitals. Deceived as the public have been, the humbug still goes on. When will Pope's line be fulfilled:

Star after star goes out, and all is night.

We should rather have a rush-light, if it burn clear and bright, than a star obscured by the mists of ignorance and presumption, and

upheld as we regret to say it is, by a portion of the community. We look upon a star as a speculator upon theatrical stock, and the credulity of the public. He selects out the manager of a theatre as his victim, and then absquatulates with all the funds. The way it is done is this: the star presents himself to the manager, with nothing but his assurance and a letter of introduction, actually worth nothing in the market; the good natured manager takes him into his business, and they commence trade together; at first it is good,—grows bad—still worse—the capital of assurance dwindles away—the letter of introduction, a humbug. They separate—the star moves off, its light dimmed a little, but enough remains to conduct him farther on his way. The manager to keep up his character and not expose his folly to the world, silently broods over his loss, instead of advertising the plausible speculator upon the public.

In a commercial point of view, such a transaction would draw down upon the simple merchant the sneers, and well merited censure of all business men; and why should it be tolerated, sanctioned, and not condemned in the other avocations of life, we are at a loss to conceive.

Mr. Tasistro's literary attainments are but a portion of the essential qualities necessary to make up the actor. The wretched houses he draws are evidence enough of the public sentiment upon that subject. He should not be tolerated as a star.

Mr. James Wallack, jr., is a young man of much promise; yet his name should not have been paraded in large letter, although his Rolla, at the Walnut street theatre, was a very creditable performance. The Alonzo of Mr. Davenport was equally good, and, we thought, more legitimate, and equally deserving the marked notice of the management. Mr. Davenport is an actor.

Mr. J. R. Scott, and Mr. Conner, have so frequently played star engagements, that the public are satisfied with them in that peculiar province of stage folly, and would no doubt be much better pleased with them when seen in, the regular company, in a modest and unassuming manner.

PARK THEATRE.

The performance at this theatre, on Wednesday evening Sept. 1st, consisted of Midsummer Night's Dream, of which we spoke last week. The difficulties attendant upon the production on our modern stage of this most exquisite emanation of the poet's brain, was as well conquered we imagine as it well could be. Great praise is due to Mr. Barry for his careful arrangement, which, although tending to mar the poetry, added highly to the effect. We noticed one or two new scenes, but with the exception of those, we nodded to all the others as old acquaintances. Mrs. Knight as Puck, that mischief-loving imp of the Fairy, sang most pleasantly: her voice is not of the sweet tone, which delighted us in days of yore; it has become, as we thought, wiry; still the energy which she threw into the characters was well deserving the applause she received. Miss Cushman more than delighted us in Oberon, the king of the fairies. There is an abandon in this lady's performance, which almost charms us into forgetfulness, that we

are witnessing a performance. She seems, as it were, to grasp at the author's meaning instantly, and enters into the spirit of the character she is enacting, with all the skill and determination of an artiste. We predict for her an enviable position in her arduous profession. We imagined that a person might be found more competent to fill the part of Fatania, than Miss Taylor; her voice is a pure contralto, and with practice she will make in time a sweet singer; but her inability to render the speeches of Fatania understood by the audience, contributed to mar the effect of the scenes. And now to the mortals.

The character of Duke Theseus was confided to Mr. Fredericks, who pleased us as much by the careful and classical manner, in which he rendered it. Mrs. Groves, as Hypolita, was as unlike the bouncing Amazon as we could well imagine. Miss S. Cushman, or as we say 'the pretty Miss Cushman,' as *Helena*, charmed us by her exquisite delineation of that most difficult character. This young lady has improved vastly since she left this city, and needs only to give time and attention to her profession to reach a high stand. *Hermia* was entrusted to Miss Buloid, and we could have wished she had been less cold. *Lysander* and *Demetrius*, the *lovers* of the comedy, were personated by Messrs. Wheatley and Clarke; in the former gentleman, we noticed much to commend, and much to condemn. A disagreeable and self-approbative shaking of the head, is one of this young gentleman's greatest faults, and a provincialism, if we may so term it, in his pronunciation—for instance *Hellener* for *Helena*—idea for *idea*, &c., and another, torment for torment, and communicate for communicate. These are slight faults which time and attention will correct, and which we trust, Mr. W. will pardon us for noticing. Mr. Clarke was respectable in *Demetrius*. Of the comic characters in this play, the palm must be awarded to Mr. Fisher, who paid great regard to his author, and acted well his part. We wish we could say as much of W. H. Williams, who, although an actor of much merit, trifles with his reputation. The minor characters were filled respectably.

The orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Chubb, does not appear to us to be under that control, which was its wont when Pearson filled the leader's chair. How is it we have such a finished musician and master of his profession, in New York, and not employed at this establishment? It is not well, and must be looked to. We were wondering where all those beautiful *lights* and *shades* were, that we used to revel in; when we now listen to an orchestra pumping, each one with all his might, as if to see which one could make the most noise.

The *Maid of Croissy* was the after piece; but it is too neat to be performed in that position, with an amusing play. Browne, ever excellent, in this, seems to excel himself; surely he is the most finished artist in this country. Miss Cushman, Mrs. Vernon, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Wheatley, enacted their parts with their accustomed energy.

On Monday was revived, the beautiful old comedy of the Poor Gentleman. Who can forget poor old Jack Barnes, in the character of Sir Robert Bramble? The cast was good. Mr. Latham as Sir Robert, agreeably disap-

pointed us. Browne, as Dr. Ollapod, was finished and excellent. Fredericks, as Lieut. Worthington, was dignified and gentlemanly. We think this gentleman deserving of more praise than he receives at the hands of the New Yorkers. Ever careful and perfect in his role he never offends, and very often takes us by surprise. The quietude of his acting, may by some be attributed to his want of energy. We think otherwise. Fisher, as Humphrey Dobbins; Williams, as Stephen Harrowby, and Andrews, as Sir Charles Copeland, were all excellent delineations. In the latter, we missed our old favorite Richings; it is in characters like this that he shines pre-eminently. Mr. Wheatley in Frederick, was rather fish-out-of-water-ish. Mr. Barry made his bow to his old friends as Corporal Foss. A general excellence pervades all this gentleman's delineations. Mrs. Wheatley delighted us in Lucretia McTab, an excellent assumption of dignity, won for her most deserved applause. She is without a rival in her line, in this country, and stepped forward to acknowledge that reception so well deserved and so hastily given—with all the elegance of a "lady of the old school." Miss Cushman did not "fill our eye" in Emily Worthington. We think her sister much better fitted for these quiet characters than herself; still she called down applause which ever attends merit. Our space being shortened, we must bring this to a close; not without expressing the utmost approbation at the excellent manner in which this comedy was cast.

MR. JOHN BARNES.

Death! great proprietor of all! 'tis thine
To tread out empires, and to quench the stars.
Young.

The name of Jack Barnes, whose recent death it is our painful duty to record, is associated with the dramatic history of our country, more particularly, however, of New York, for upwards of twenty years, and the lovers of fun will long remember the laughter-moving phiz of the comedian when all that was earthly shall have mouldered away, and commingled with its kinered earth. We knew Jack Barnes, we have enjoyed many a happy hour in his company, and his jokes rise up to memory's portal with all the freshness of that happy period; but we cannot record them now.

In 1836 he made a southern tour with his interesting and talented family, we encountered them in New Orleans, where they sojourned awhile. Mr. Barnes extended his trip to Texas and was the first comedian of note who appeared there as a star.

Mr. Barnes was a genuine son of Momus, and in the days of his fame had scarcely an equal. His Sir Peter Teazle, and Billy Lackaday are associated with our earliest recollections, and his Delph, age itself could not deteriorate from—he was the Delph up to the close of his life.

Mr. Barnes died in Halifax, N. S. on Saturday, the 28th ultimo. Up to within a few days of his death, he played his regular round of characters, among which was Sir Peter Teazle. But the scene was over—the prompter's bell was heard, it sounded fearful in the gloom and the silence of night—the curtain of death was down—the light of life went out, never again in that tabernacle of "fun and good humour" to be relit. All was darkness. Poor Jack was dead. The body was brought to New York City on Saturday last.

To Bennett's Herald, of the 6th inst., we are indebted for the following:

Funeral of "Old Barnes."—Last night, at 6 o'clock, the remains of poor old Jack were conveyed to their final resting place, in St. Mark's Church, attended by a long train of his professional friends and admirers. The pall was borne by Managers Simpson and Thorne, Messrs. Fisher, sen., John Blake, Rufus Blake, and Charles Howard. A very long train followed, which included nearly all the members of the Park, Chatham, and Bowery companies. Many a well known face we noted, which seemed to look upon the pageant, as if to say with Hamlet—

These
But as the trappings and the suits of woe,
While I have that within which passeth show.

DRAMATIC INCIDENT.

The following scene actually occurred at the St. Charles Street Theatre, New Orleans, during the hours of rehearsal:—

SCENE the Stage.—Latham Stage manager, seated at a table, with the prompter. MR. RADCLIFF in a posture of earnest expostulation; a stately figure in the back ground. The splendid Chandelier, in the immensity of space, weight 4250.

Radcliff. It is impossible, Mr. Latham. Three parts to study before evening, it is out of the question, and curse me if I will attempt it.

Latham. Mr. Radcliff, it must be, there is no backing out.

Radcliff. Then, sir, I will be hissed by the audience, it is not pleasant, Mr. Latham, to be goosed, particularly by a New Orleans audience.

Latham. It is not pleasant to be hissed in any theatre, Mr. Radcliff, we actors however on that point are remarkably sensitive.

Radcliff. If I study them I'll be d—d. Nor is it in the power of man to commit to memory such a mess of infernal nonsense, do you take me for a d—d fool, Latham?

Latham. Whatever my private opinion may be, sir, it would not be polite to express it publicly. There are the parts.

Radcliff. To hell with them, and the whole concern.

The stately figure in the back ground moves forward increasing like the evening shadows, in length, as he approached the confines of the mimic world, exposing no less a personage than James H. Caldwell.

Caldwell. Mr. Radcliff, such language is only suited for a barn. Do you know, do you not feel, sir, where you are? This sir, is the temple of the Holy Nine, it is consecrated to the cause of the legitimate drama, and must not, shall not be profaned by such base and unmanly language. Mr. Radcliff, you are a member of the company, you should feel proud in being so, for there is a pride in the knowledge we have, that all who are connected with us are gentlemen and artists. Look around you, sir, imagine those boxes filled with thousands of intellectual faces, and while imagining this, conceive, sir; conceive, I say, the effect such language would have upon them. Look, sir, at the rich; nay, gorgeous appearance of this temple, are you not ashamed, sir, to utter words calculated to sully the chastity which reigns within it. Look, sir, at that lamp, a lamp the admiration of the world, and which has been immortalized by a critic of the city, one Colley Cibber, (our humble self,) as being the sun to shine upon a world of my creating. Think of that, sir, and blush. Mr. Radcliff, you are not in the Camp, (a rival theatre,) you are, sir, in the San Carlos of the world!!

[The figure moves away majestically. Radcliff, Latham, and Prompter, perfectly mystified.]

FANNY ELSSLER,

The engagement of this distinguished and fascinating danseuse has filled the boxes of Old Drury, every evening of her performance with the elite of the city, and as you gaze around upon the gay and fashionable throng—

"Soft eyes look love to eyes,
Which speak again."

We have refrained from noticing *la belle Elsler*, until the present moment in order that enthusiasm should not predominate over our usually staid deportment. And singular as it may appear, the witchery of her graceful movements, has been perfectly irresistible, and in common with the throng, who nightly assemble at her levees, we find ourselves there, too, doing homage to her feats upon "the light fantastic toe."

On survey of the audience last Wednesday evening, we were particularly amused with the heterogeneous mass who had congregated to gaze upon the ethereal movements of the "*Divine Fanny*." The dress circle presented a galaxy of youth, beauty and fashion. Some of the loveliest female countenances, we ever beheld were there seated, with eyes lit up in resplendent loveliness, glowing with admiration at the grace and elasticity of step, which characterises this truly popular dancer.

And despite the experience of many old players whom we thought had seen all which the stage could present; you could see here and there a veteran amateur with his grey head bent forward in earnest gaze to witness each *pas* that was made, and exhibiting at each achievement, pleasure which had marked those of "days of lang syne."

The house was perfectly thronged in every part, and we deemed it a luxury wherever an arm was placed a-kimbo, so that a perspective was thereby afforded us through the interstice. It affords us much pleasure to see this favourite theatre filled with such overflowing audiences, as it recalls to mind the palmy days of Wood and Warren, when the master spirits of the stage, "held the mirror as it were up to nature;" but the reflection is attended at the same time, with a melancholy sensation, that "we shall not look upon their like again," in these degenerate days.

Apart from these reflections, one must certainly be divested of a considerable portion of taste, who could witness the aerial flights of the charming Fanny, and not be moved with their transcendent beauty. It is no exaggeration to say—

"She moves a Goddess, and looks a Queen."

In the several ballets of *Nothalie*, *Sylph*, and *Tarentule*, we see the versatility of her talents in a remarkable degree, and all of them enacted to perfection. With what delightful *navete* and simplicity does she enact the part of *Nathalie*? We feel completely dispossessed of any critical disposition, whilst regarding even her *pantomime*, which in our estimation far surpasses the *grimaces* we have been accustomed to witness in some of "the jumpers," who have appeared on our boards.

It would be superfluous to enter into a detail of the respective merits of her *pas seules*, or to inform those who have not witnessed her *Cachuca*, *Smolenska*, *Craco-vienne*, *El Jaleo de Jerez*, that they are the very embodiment of grace. One of the most peculiar charms is in the winning smiles and graceful inclinations of

her head, as she approaches the audience, which fails not to produce tremendous applause, and a repetition vociferously demanded by her enthusiastic admirers.

The expressive face of Elssler, and her perfect symmetry of figure, are powerful auxiliaries towards inducing a favourable impression upon the part of an audience; and then, her dancing—the “very poetry of motion.” The reader will doubtless perceive that our prose is now verging fast to poetry, which induces us to stop and reflect ere we proceed too far into the regions of the sublime. On our honest word, however, ere we dismiss this subject, those who would gaze upon the most graceful creature, and finished dancer, who has ever presented themselves upon an American Stage, should go at once and see Fanny Elssler!

MISS SARAH ANN PORTER.

—A Star not borrowing light,
But in its own glad essence bright.—Moore.

This talented young lady, the daughter of our old and respected friend, Charles S. Porter, made her first appearance this season, on Saturday last, at the Walnut Street Theatre, as Cora, in the play of Pizarro.

The character of Cora is one of peculiar interest to the youthful portion of an audience, and the actress is always sure of having their sympathies throughout. This is not surprising, for the cunning author having drawn two very distinct portraits, it necessarily follows that the more youthful and amiable one is sure to have the most admirers.

Miss Porter's first appearance on the stage, was on the occasion of her father's benefit, as Virginia, in the play of *Virginius*, December, 17th. 1838. We were not present, but a highly complimentary notice of her acting, from a popular journal is now before us. Her second appearance was in the character of *Henriette*, January 21st, 1839. Her third as *Pauline*, in which she was highly complimented by our native tragedian, Forrest. In succession, she played *Therese*, *Lucille*, *Cordelia*, *Mariana*, *Mrs. Haller*; *Isabella*, in *Tortosa*, *Julia*, *Eusebia*, &c.

As a compliment to native talent, a gentleman of this city has written and presented to this young lady an original drama, the principal character of which is drawn to suit the peculiar powers of the actress, it is entitled *Amaldi, or the Brigand's Daughter*. Of its merits, it is not for us to speak, suffice however, to say that she is delighted with it, and upon that hint we should prognosticate success.*

With kind feeling, we would respectfully suggest to this young lady the propriety of speaking with less rapidity. Precipitancy confounds all articulation, and all meaning, the extreme of speaking too fast is much more common than a drawing pronunciation and requires the more to be guarded against, because when it has grown up into a habit, few errors are more difficult to be corrected. To pronounce with a proper degree of slowness, and with a full and clear articulation, is the first thing to be studied by all who begin to speak in public, and cannot be too much recommended.

*We presume that this drama will be produced at the Walnut Street Theatre, as Miss Porter is engaged as a regular member of the company.

commended by them. Such a pronounciation gives weight and dignity to their discourse.*

This little defect so easily remedied, struck us more particularly in her Cora, and as we have adapted the public method of pointing out errors, as well as beauties, we hope Miss Porter will profit by our hint.

With an excellent figure for the stage, a face decidedly good for tragedy, a voice of considerable flexibility and power, we can see no bar to her future success in the highest walks of the drama.

“Thou art in life's morning, and as yet
The world looks witchingly; its fruits and flowers

Are fair and fragrant, and its beauteous bowers
Seems haunts of happiness before thee set,
All lovely as a land-cape freshly wet
With dew, or bright with sunshine after showers,
Where pleasure dwells, and Flora's magic powers
Woo thee to pluck fame's peerless coronet.”

PHILADELPHIA THEATRICALS.

THE NATIONAL.—Nothing of an extraordinary nature at this house beyond what we noticed in our last. The Swiss Brothers have been giving their classical illustrations, with much effect. We understand that Mr. Burton contemplates getting up several of Forrest's best pieces for his next engagement in a masterly manner. Such as *Richelieu*, *Aylmere*, (Judge Conrad's successful piece,) *King John*, &c., Such pieces well got up—good casts—actors perfect in their parts, are calculated to give a tone and character to the drama, essentially necessary to its present condition. There is a revival of the legitimate drama in Europe, and New York, and why not in Philadelphia?

THE ARCH STREET THEATRE.—Dinneford has produced the nautical drama of the *Water Witch*, or the *Skimmer of the Seas*, with a truly imposing effect, like all other spectacles, which this indefatigable and worthy manager undertakes. We sojourned the entire piece the other evening, (quite an unusual occurrence with us now,) and left the establishment with the intention of stating this fact to the public, who are ever ready to patronise a play, when well represented,

The novelties forthcoming, will ensure a full attendance, and serve to replenish the coffers of the manager, which in common with those of the other places of amusement have paled beneath the Elssler star!

There are several performers attached to this theatre, who are possessed of merit, and among them we might name, Messrs. Charles, Watson, Altamus, Harrison, &c., and Mesdames Charles, La Forrest, Harrison, and Brunton. The prices of admission being reduced to a level with that of the Walnut st, we should not be surprised to see a rivalry between these two pieces, prevail among “the up town and down boys.” So long as they both present “a card of attraction”—the public favor will be influenced.

ROOKWOOD.

A drama by this name will be produced at the Arch Street Theatre this evening. We have taken a peep at some of the preparations, and from the detail of the bill, we anticipate a rich treat.

* Blair.

WALNUT STREET THEATRE.—James Wallack Jr. &c. &c. “Undine” has exhausted her powers of attraction at this house, the water spouts must for awhile be stopped. Young Wallack's Rolla has been one of the features of the week, although in another portion of our paper we condemn the starring system upon which he is announced. Still we must do him the justice to say, that it was an excellent performance throughout. It could not be otherwise, for he is connected with those whose names are almost synonymous with that of Rolla, and it seems to be an heirloom in the family. Mr. Davenport's Alonzo, was really fine, deserving all praise. The gentleman who enacted Pizarro, is no doubt a warm admirer of Kean, and we must do him the justice to say, that he carried his admiration to personality. Miss Randolph's Elvira, although not a blameless piece of acting, was very good; this young lady, reads with good taste and sound judgement. In the lighter walks of the drama, she is more at home.

Miss Porter's Cora, was much applauded, she needs must become a favorite for the artists is discernable in her every attitude.

NEW YORK THEATRICALS.

PARK.—The admirers of the legitimate drama have had a rare feast served to them at this house in the representations of the sterling old comedies of the “Poor Gentleman,” “Heir at Law,” “Wild Oats,” &c., played by the whole strength of the company, which includes Browne, Latham and Williams. We are also happy to say the attendance has been very fair, indeed more than could have been expected in these days of slack wires, heels, vetoes, &c.

NIBLO'S.—“The Spitalfield's Weaver,” under the title of the “Fashionable Arrivals,” with other attraction, for the benefit of the proprietor on Monday night. Nothing new for some time. We should like to know why Niblo has not opened his garden on Sunday evenings as usual?

BOWERY.—On Monday evening Mrs. Shaw made her appearance after a lapse of some ten months, as “Fiora,” in Miss L. H. Medina's celebrated play of “*Il Maledetto*.” The effects of her late severe indisposition is only to be noticed in her voice, which is not quite so powerful as formerly. In the second scene of the first act, where Gonzago upbraids her for her perfidy towards Alberto, the words “and”—“became the wife of the Doge of Venice,” were admirable; and the scene where he plots the death of her husband, the Doge of Venice by her own hand, was finely given, and elicited well deserved applause. Alberto by Mr. Ifield was very fair, though not equal to what he can do. The Doge by Mr. McCutcheon, was the best thing we have seen this gentleman do; Gonzago by Mr. Foster was very good. The play throughout, was well got up and well played. Mrs. Shaw's reception was most enthusiastic. At the end of the play she was called out and made a speech. The Bowery boys must have an idol, and Mrs. Shaw is worthy of their worship. Hamblin played Hamlet on Tuesday night to a full house, and gave general satisfaction. On Wednesday Mrs. Shaw appeared as Ion, with the “Chain of Guilt,” to close the performances.

CHATHAM.—On Monday night the drama of "Valsha," "Miser's Daughter," and the ballet of "La Sonnambula," with Madam Le-compte Mons. Martin and others. On Wednesday night Kirby took a benefit, and played Claude Melnotte and Rolla. The house was crammed.

OLYMPIC.—Mitchell opens his Comic Temple on Monday night next, he is the very prince of managers, and we hope will give us some new local burlettas.

BALTIMORE THEATRICALS.

Wemyss commenced his season here on Monday evening, to a tolerably well filled house; with J. S. Jones' drama of the "Carpenter of Rouen."

BOSTON.

The Tremont has been only doing a tolerable business lately. Sinclair failed to produce any great sensation, and his benefit was but poorly attended. Hackett opened in Falstaff on the 6th inst. to a good house.

Pelby has a strong melo-dramatic company at the National—Murdoch is a valuable acquisition to this house; where the legitimate drama has been produced since the opening.

GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE.

The last number of this delightful periodical accidentally fell into our hands, it is rich in all that constitutes mental wealth, and is in every respect worthy the high commendations lavished upon it by the press generally.

For the Dramatic Mirror.

THE DEBUT.

BY A DRAMATIC AUTHOR.

I remember, one day being accosted by a journeyman carpenter, whom I had known for several years, and who begged me to procure him an engagement with Mr. Wood, manager of the Chestnut Street theatre, Philadelphia, having the implements of his trade in his hands, I of course thought he expected the situation of head carpenter. I told him I would make the inquiry of Mr. W., and if the situation was vacant, I had no doubt but what it could be obtained for him. The following dialogue took place.

Author. "Do you understand the business as connected with the theatre?"

Carpenter. I flatter myself I could walk the boards.

Author. Work them you mean? Mr. Wood, however, would prefer one accustomed to the duties.

Carpenter. I am not a novice, sir, and feel confident of success.

Author. Oh! then you do know something of the business?

Carpenter. In course I does, I was once with Mestayer.

Author. Well I will see the manager, and as he is getting up Marnion he may employ you.

Carpenter. It is a character I have not studied, Author. What have you to do with character, the procuring of scenery and properties, are the duties of the stage manager, and he will furnish you the plans.

Carpenter. The part is one of a minor consideration, and as I only wish for two nights.

Author. Two nights? I cannot perceive the necessity of speaking to the manager upon the subject, it can be of no advantage to either party.

Carpenter. That is as it may turn out.

[Drawing himself up in tragic style.

Author. If you wish to engage for the season, I will speak for you, otherwise—

Carpenter. What! "As a stock actor? never."

Author. Why, you don't mean to say, that you want to play?

Carpenter. I wish sir, to make my *de-but* in "Rolla."

I was silenced instant.

A BUSY AUCTIONEER.

An English auctioneer announces in a newspaper advertisement, that he has so much business he has recently worn out two hammers, and is now on the second end of the third!

For the Dramatic Mirror.

THESPIAN ASSOCIATIONS.

"A speaker good was he, and his first essay,
Was in that garden bed of speech, a private play."
Chapman's Orator.

Mr. Editor,—Under the above head I feel induced to offer a few thoughts for your valuable "Mirror," with a hope that should I fail to present anything interesting, I may perhaps awaken the attention of abler correspondents to the subject. I have seen very little in print touching Dramatic Associations, but have heard many things said in their condemnation, to the great disparagement and annoyance of Thespian Amateurs and Blind Alley spouters. Yet in my humble opinion, if those who say that such associations are not right, could write what they say, their merits or demerits might be partly discussed and the public could judge from collected facts whether these rude miniatures of the "mimic world" are productive of good or evil.

Man it has been truly remarked, is an imitative animal, Thespis, though famed as the first actor, may have been the first who acted for fame, but he was not to my thinking the first mimic mirror of man.

There is inherent with our nature a propensity to mimic character and manner, which is clearly developed in our infancy long before we see or hear of "things theatrical." Performances of this description constitute the first pastimes of our sunny childhood, and we instinctively try to personate goblins, hags, old men, women, &c., or whatever striking character we see or hear of. I have beheld a school scene represented, wherein some refractory or mischievous little pupil was examined, sentenced, and chastised by the infantine performers, with a striking accuracy, and a gravity that was irresistible. It is related of Mr. Senefelder, an actor and dramatist at the theatre Royal Mimich, and who by-the-by, was the real discoverer of Lithography, that ere he was three years of age or had entered a theatre, he personated an irritable old man with a skill and truth as admirable as it was astonishing. Such things are not uncommon to a strict observer, they are efforts of our whimsical mother nature, to mirror as it were her own eccentricities; why then should we censure her children for naturally associating, or clubbing together for this innocent and intellectual pastime, or wonder that some spirit more gifted than the rest should, through love of fame, make it the passion of his soul?

It is urged by many that such associations, impart immorality and a romantic recklessness to the youthful mind, and turn it from more profitable studies and pursuits. I contend that they are, when properly conducted, calculated like the regular stage, to awaken in the heart the fullest sense of every duty and moral obligation. They bring the mind more intimately than any other pursuit in connection with letters, those magic character that expand the soul beyond its narrow circle to comprehend wonders and to create them. They lead to a study of the noble drama, that vast portrait gallery of human character, where virtue is represented in all her captivating loveliness, and vice in his dark deformity; where truth and honor stand beckoning forward to emulative duties, and where language in its richness and purity, is studied with gems of thought, the glowing truths of which sparkle in the sermon of the divine. The charge of the judge, and the pleading of the advocate.

In addition to all this, these institutions create a habit of study, and I may say steady habits. They afford a useful and healthful exercise to the memory and to the lungs, and while they call forth the most salutary mental and physical exertions, they keep the youth from vicious associations and haunts which lead to dissipation and debasement.

In my next, Mr. Editor, I shall with other matters, examine the objections held by the theatrical profession to Thespian associations; notice certain evils that grow out of such institutions, and propose what I think may serve as a remedy.

SEXTUS.

A new play by Sheridan Knowles, is said to be in preparation, in which Mr. C. Kean, and Ellen Tree are to play the principal characters.

SHOOTING.

When Macready was playing *William Tell*, in an obscure country town, he was tantalized more than usual in drilling those persons who had the little parts to play; but his greatest trouble was to make a gentleman speak two words in something like a civilized manner.—The character this worthy represented has, in Tell's inquiry, "Do you shoot?" to reply, "I do." The tragedian thought he had succeeded in making him able to deliver this simple sentence in a way to save the scene from being laughed at; but judge his consternation, when at night he answered in those words— "Shoot. Bless ye master, I brings down scores of larks."

SUPERSTITION.

Our pagan ancestors not content with deriving the origin of the universe from the Eternal and Sublime Architect, delegated the works and operations of nature to subordinate divinities. The Greeks had their Naiads, Silvana and Satyrs, and in the Hebrew theology, we read of the agency of arch-angels and Seraphim. From whence, it is evident, that the current opinion of the vulgar respecting Genii, Fairies, Spectres and apparitions, arose from this ancient doctrine. Among the fairies, according to the opinion of popular superstition, every Milesian family in Ireland, is supposed to have a guardian genius.

Liston asked Matthews to play for his benefit; the latter excused himself, as he had to act elsewhere. "I would if I could," said he, "but I can't split myself in half." "Umph! I don't know that," said Liston, "I have often seen you play in two pieces the same night."

The nominal salary of the examiner of plays the office lately filled by Mr. Charles Kemble, is 500*l.* per annum, but there are abatements which reduce it to 320*l.* a year. The examiner for the lord chamberlain, who licenses the plays for the patent theatres, receives two guineas for each play, and one guinea for each farce.

EPITAPHS.

From several grave yards or burying grounds, near London.

"What ere's our fate that we must have,
Mine it was a watery grave."

"Neither in bud, nor in bloom,
Did fatal death spare us in our doom."

"When this you see, pray think of me,
And bear me in your mind,
Let all the world say what they will,
Speak of me as you find."

"Go home, dear friends, and shed no tears
We must lie here till Christ appears;
And at his coming hope to have
A glorious rising from the grave."

"Though we lie sleeping in the dust,
Our saviour Christ, in whom we trust,
Will one day raise us up again,
With him in heaven to remain."

THE THEATRE

We look upon a well regulated Theatre as a school from which we derive a moral lesson, and so it is. In all ages the Drama has been looked upon as the medium through which the poet could best convey his ideas—and "hold as it 'twere the mirror up to nature; we never should have appreciated Shakspeare so much, if his sublime ideas had not been conveyed through this medium, they otherwise would have been read and thrown idly by." Truth has been identified with the Drama, virtue a leading principle—not can the most fastidious find in the well regulated Theatre any thing calculated to alarm them, or draw from their educated minds, prejudices to alarm others. So on, the Legislator of Athens makes use of these emphatic words when truth was infringed upon in some of their representations, "if we applaud falsehood, says he, in our public exhibitions, we shall soon find out that it will insinuate itself into our most secret and sacred engagements."—Taking this as the best authority, we shall extend our criticism to the actors as well as the authors, and truth shall be our motto.

EDMUND KEAN.

(Concluded.)

In the same town of Croydon it was, that, some twelve months afterwards, Kean, by one of the happiest retorts on theatrical record, evinced the consciousness of his own mental power, and triumphantly repelled the ignorant and invidious attack of "the cant of criticism." He was announced for *Alexander the Great*; and the triumphal car, in which our hero was drawn in mimic procession, had just reached the centre of the stage, when, as it passed in "slow and solemn state" by the foot-lights, some supercilious coxcomb in the stage-box exclaimed, with a sneer, "Alexander the Great! Alexander the Little!" Kean, with admirable presence of mind, turned his head deliberately round, without altering his position, and fixing his eye with a look of ineffable scorn upon the self-sufficient sneerer, replied, "Yes! but with a great soul!" The spirit of the actor roused the audience to a just sense of the insult that had so unworthily been offered to him, and whilst they applauded the promptitude and manliness of the retort, his mortified assailant slunk away from the scene of his triumph.

Kean proceeded from Croydon to Swansea, and from thence to Waterford. At Waterford, he married a Miss Chambers; and, previously to their leaving the place, Kean took his benefit; relating to which Mr. Grattan has given the following account: "Kean was so popular, both as an actor and from the excellent character he bore, that the audience thought less of the actress's demerits than of the husband's feelings. And besides this, the *debutante* had many personal friends in her native city, and among the gentry of the neighbourhood, for she had been governess to the children of a lady of large fortune, who used all her influence at this benefit. After the tragedy, Kean gave a specimen of tight-rope dancing, and another of sparring, with a professional pugilist. He then played the leading part in a musical interlude; and finished with *Chimpanzee*, or some such name, the monkey in the melo-dramatic pantomime of *La Perouse*; and in this character he showed agility scarcely surpassed by the Mazurier of Gouffe, and touches of deep tragedy in the monkey's death-scene, which made the whole audience shed tears.

"A few years afterwards I happened to be in London; and Kean was there in the very height of his reputation, for he was firmly established, having triumphed over the envious, or conscientious, opposition of the Kemble school, and stood his ground against the more perilous risk of public caprice.

Soon after this, Kean went to Scotland, and from thence to Belfast, where Mr. Atkins then wielded the theatrical truncheon; and there, soon after his arrival, he was called upon, with the brief notice of two days, to study *Osmyn*, in *The Mourning Bride*,—the tragedy in which Mrs. Siddons proposed commencing an engagement of three nights. From Belfast, Kean proceeded to London, and played one season in minor characters; after which he went to Weymouth, Guernsey, and thence to Gloucester and Exeter, where his tragedy was not much admired, though his singing and dancing were always warmly applauded. Dr. Drury, who had long marked the aspiring originality of his genius, and the rapid strides with which he was advancing towards excellence, was so struck with his performance at Exeter, in 1813, that he wrote to Mr. Pascoe Grenfell, one of the managing committee of Drury Lane theatre, recommending that a trial should be granted him there; and observing that Kean alone was capable of sustaining the declining fortunes of the theatre. Drury Lane was then on the verge of ruin,—the tide of public favour had set against the house,—novelty after novelty was produced in vain—in a word, the house was literally deserted. At this critical moment, Mr. Grenfell received Dr. Drury's communication, when it was immediately decided upon sending Mr. Arnold, the then stage-manager of Drury Lane, to determine upon the correctness of Dr. Drury's statement. Mr. Arnold saw Kean in *Ottavian*, in the *Mountaineers*,

and *Kanko* in *La Perouse*, at the Dorchester theatre, and immediately engaged him for three years, at an increasing salary of eight guineas a week for the first year, ten for the second, and twelve for the third. The pleasant anticipations, which this good fortune was calculated to inspire, were damped by the death of his eldest son, which took place on the same day. He had to make his way up to the metropolis in absolute poverty; to support himself, his wife, and the son still left them, in a style of apparent competence, till the arrangements of the theatre afforded him an opportunity of putting his talents to the test of a London audience.

He nigh abandoned the undertaking altogether, and made up his mind to return back to the provinces as the hour of trial approached; had he not accidentally encountered an old friend, even on the morning preceding his first appearance in *Shylock*, who succeeded in stimulating him to the decisive effort,—and decisive it was. The house, though not crowded, presented no "beggarly account of empty boxes;" but, after greeting the new *Shylock* with such applause as is customary, the audience were painfully silent, until he uttered the words "I will be assured," &c., then!—as he himself expressed it—"Then, indeed, I felt—I knew, I had them with me!" From that moment to the close of the trial-scene, the applause that crowned his exertions was enthusiastic. The originality of the style, and the vigour of his genius drew down the most enthusiastic applause, which heightened with every scene, until, at length, it became absolutely tumultuous. His fame increased with every successive repetition of the character, and it was soon admitted that he might challenge competition with the brightest and most distinguished ornaments of the stage; but it was reserved for his performance of *Richard the Third*, to place him at once on the highest pinnacle of dramatic glory. It was by Kean, that, after one hundred and thirty-nine nights, of continued loss and disappointment, the interests of Drury Lane theatre were revived, and that season which promised to involve all concerned in the establishment in one general ruin, was turned to that of brilliant success and extraordinary profit.

In July, 1820, Kean, intending to go to America announced his *farewell benefit*, at the King's Theatre. He offered a most unprecedented series of entertainments as the attraction, and many went from an apprehension that it was the last time they should ever have an opportunity of seeing him; the consequence was, that, many hours before the performances began, the doors of the opera house were completely besieged; the crowd extending completely round the house, and across the street. Never did we witness such an extraordinary or so interesting a theatrical display. He gave the fourth act of *Richard the Third*, the fourth of *The Merchant of Venice*, the fifth of *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, the second of *Macbeth*, and the third of *Othello*; in all of which, of course, he sustained the principal part. He went through his undertaking with a surprising degree of energy, and preserved his strength well to the last.

Kean made his first appearance in America, in the city of New York, as Richard III. November 1820. He returned to England in September of the following year. His second visit to the United States was in 1825.

Kean died at his house, in Richmond, on Wednesday, May the 15th, in the forty-sixth year of his age. His dramatic career closed prematurely and unexpectedly, but a few weeks before, in the performance of his favourite *Othello*, at Covent Garden theatre, under circumstances as unprecedented in the history of the Drama, as they were deeply interesting in themselves, and painfully affecting to all who witnessed the extraordinary scene; as owing to some misunderstanding with the lessee of Drury Lane theatre, he withdrew from this establishment, and concluded an engagement with the lessee of Covent Garden, with the understanding that he would play in concert with his son, Charles Kean. They were accordingly announced; and a house, crowded in

every part, justified the most sanguine anticipation of their success. The scene in which the Moor appeared, followed by "mine ancient," can never be forgotten by those who beheld it. The applause was tumultuous,—the spirit of enthusiasm pervaded all,—and never, perhaps, were the generous sympathies of an audience more vividly displayed than at that moment. It may well be considered as an era in the annals of the stage; for we should vainly trace through those annals for a parallel to that scene. It was not merely the fact of father and son having attained to such excellence in the histrionic art as to be thus qualified to assume, in the same play, and on the same occasion, the two most difficult characters in the whole range of tragic drama, unprecedented as the fact really is—it was not the mere novelty of a new *Iago*; but there stood Edmund Kean, the only *Othello* of the modern stage, no longer opposing the bent of his son's genius, but sacrificing all his repugnance to that son's adoption of a profession in which he saw so much even to embitter the very enjoyment of supremacy and success—and entering with him upon a trial of skill in that play in which so many an *Iago* had proved but "a foil," making

—his skill like a star in the darkest night, stick fiery off indeed."

It was a spectacle never to be forgotten, to see the great tragedian leading forward that son—attesting, with a father's pride, their perfect reconciliation—enjoying the paternal triumph which his success at so early an age could not fail to excite in such a heart as Kean's—presenting him to those from whose hands he had himself won the meed of high renown, as a worthy competitor for the garland of dramatic fame which they had conferred upon him, whenever the hand of Time should snatch it from his own brow. But if all hearts beat high with joy and exultation in that scene, what were the sensations with which, after the delivery of that passage in which Kean breathed, in tones of soul-subduing pathos, the anguish—the all but mortal agony of an "overcharged heart," giving his last sigh of desolation and despair to the wreck of all its hopes, of all its happiness—the last "farewell" to the hero's ambition, to the soldier's glory, to the husband's cherished bliss, to the human weakness, the sympathies and the affections of the man—the mournful melody of his voice coming over the spirit like the desolate moaning of the blast that precedes the thunder-storm—he faltered forth the words "*Othello's* occupation's gone!" and sunk almost exhausted on the arm of his son! A sudden and a saddening conviction smote every heart that the last effort of the tragedian was then made, and the stage had lost its brightest ornament. Thus did we behold him, sinking powerless at the very goal of his ambition, and, like the Spartan, resigning to his son the torch he could no longer wave aloft in its splendour.

The circumstance of Kean having played with his son, at Cork, in 1829, is not generally known to the public. Mr. Bunn, who was at that time the proprietor of the Cork theatre, having engaged Kean for eight nights, immediately sent off an offer of an engagement to his son, which being accepted, Mr. Kean, jun. found, to his utter amazement, that he was announced to play with his father, who, also, had not previously the slightest idea of the manager's intentions. Kean was, at this time, much at variance with his son; but, after much persuasion a reconciliation took place; and they accordingly dined together, previous to the Monday, April 6th, when they were advertised in *Brutus*; *Lucius Junius*, by the father, and *Titus*, by the son; after which they played together in *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Virginius*, and were announced in *The Iron Chest*, but owing to the ill state of Mr. Kean's health they did not play, though it was for his benefit.

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